

## **S.J. 24 – Oppose**

**Government Administration and Elections Committee  
Testimony – March ??, 2014**

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**Chairs and members of the Committee, my name is Luther Weeks, Executive Director of CTVotersCount, a Certified Moderator, a Computer Scientist, and a Veteran.**

**I oppose this bill for four reasons.**

- **The secret vote protects us all.** The true value of the secret vote is everyone's right that every voters' vote be secret, so that it cannot be sold or intimidated. The secret vote is not simply a right for an individual to keep their vote secret. No person can waive that right for every other voter. Like vaccination, it only works if everyone has the secret vote.
- **Military members are especially subject to intimidation and perceived intimidation,** based on the authority of command and confirmed by continuing disappointing revelations. As my Basic Training Captain expressed it, "I am your mother, your father, your sister, and your brother".

**Intimidation and perceived intimidation can encourage the signing away of the right to the secret vote and involve making it more difficult than necessary to download, print, and mail back ballots.**

- **This bill is motivated by Internet voting, a risky, unsafe method of voting.** In addition to overwhelming opposition by Computer Scientists and Security Experts, Internet voting has been discredited by a Department of Defense study, security experts from the Department of Homeland Security, and the National Institute of Standards.
- **This bill is motivated by a desire to help soldiers vote. Yet, conventional means have proven successful and economical,** when the Military and Overseas Voting (MOVE) Act has been followed by Election Officials and the Military. Facilitated, sometimes inadequately, by the same Voting Assistance Officers, that would need to assist in Internet voting.

**I oppose providing the authorization for anyone to waive the right of the secret vote, for me and for every other voter.**

**This veteran says "Support our soldiers by waiving the Flag, but do not waive the secret vote. It is critical to protecting the values they and our ancestors fought for."**

**Consider if you would trust a vote in the Ukraine, Egypt, Venezuela, or Iraq if soldiers or any citizens were authorized to vote without secrecy. Imagine in our country if church members, union members, private or public sector employees could waive their secret vote, can you imagine them voting absentee in the union hall, at a church reception, or in a company cafeteria?**

**Now imagine a soldier voting in an environment where his sergeant, commander, military intelligence or the NSA might see his or her vote by looking at a fax or intercepting an Internet communication. Where someone in town hall might see the vote or intercept it on the town**

server and know how a citizen or elected official deployed in the National Guard or their enlisted relative had voted?

I am not saying that such vote would actually need to be seen. Just the thought of the possibility would cause many to pause before voting or even consider not voting.

We have a military where officers cheat on tests which qualify them to protect nuclear arms from unauthorized firings. We have a military academy where cadets are intimidated into pretending particular religious beliefs. We have a military where soldiers see more risk in reporting or getting treatment for assaults than in exposing them. Would not those in such environments be afraid to not vote or not waive a right in fear?

There are better solutions. The Military and Overseas Voters Empowerment Act (MOVE Act) is working for many states. It is working in Connecticut. We can make it work better here and the Military must also better heed its provisions for the benefits of our military members.

Weakening the secret vote is "Democracy Theater" at its worst, providing the illusion of helping our troops, providing an illusion of democracy.

This veteran says "Support our soldiers by waiving the Flag, but do not waive the secret vote. Do not thank me for my service. Protect the secret vote that all of our soldiers and ancestors have fought and died for."

Thank you,

### Examples of Disappointing Revelations of Continuing Lapses In The Military

Huffington Post, Molly O'Toole

#### **Senate Hearing On Sexual Assault In The Military Takes On Justice System**

Posted: 03/13/2013 11:04 am EDT | Updated: 03/13/2013 3:42 pm EDT

WASHINGTON -- Senators will press top-ranking members of the military Wednesday on widespread sexual assault in the armed services, demanding action to hold perpetrators accountable as the Pentagon reviews a controversial case in which a three-star general threw out a sexual assault conviction.

At the first Senate hearing to be held on the issue in nearly a decade, members of the Armed Services Subcommittee on Personnel indicated they will push the acting general counsel for the Department of Defense and the military's top legal officials, judge advocate generals (JAG), on deficiencies in the military justice system highlighted by the case.

"The issue of sexual violence in the military is not new. And it has been allowed to go on in the shadows for far too long," Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.), the subcommittee chair, said in her opening statement. She called the military justice system dysfunctional, noting that less than one out of 10 reported attackers are held accountable. The Department of Defense estimates that military sexual assault claimed 19,000 victims in fiscal year 2011 -- more than 50 per day.

"We need to take a close look at our military justice system, and we need to be asking the hard questions, with all options on the table, including moving this issue outside of the chain of command, so we can get closer to a true zero-tolerance reality in the Armed Forces," Gillibrand continued. "The case we have all read about at Aviano Air Base is shocking, and the outcome should compel all of us to take the necessary action to ensure that justice is swift and certain, not rare and fleeting."

In November, a military jury convicted Air Force Lt. Col. James Wilkerson of aggravated sexual assault and sentenced him to a year in detention and dismissal. But on Feb. 26, Air Force Lt. Gen. Craig Franklin threw out the decision, reinstating Wilkerson, a former inspector general at Aviano Air Base in Italy.

Outcry from advocates and members of Congress over the case prompted Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel to order a review of the decision, which he detailed in a letter made public Monday.

Hagel wrote in the response to Sens. Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.) and Jeanne Shaheen (D-N.H.) that while he has no authority under the Uniform Code of Military Justice to overturn Franklin's decision, "I believe this case does raise a significant question whether it is necessary or appropriate to place the convening authority in the position of having the responsibility to review the findings and sentence of a court-martial."

Boxer spoke at the hearing Wednesday morning.

"It isn't an internal matter -- it is a violent crime and it must be treated as such," she said.

The victim in the Wilkerson case, Kimberly Hanks, 49, a civilian physician assistant, was identified for the first time by NBC Wednesday morning ahead of the hearing. Hanks still works at Aviano, according to advocacy group Protect Our Defenders, and submitted written testimony to the hearing.

"I felt that I could hold my head up, that I did the right thing," she wrote of the ending to her military trial, which convicted Wilkerson of assaulting her as she slept in a guest room in his home last March. "The actions taken by General Franklin are shocking and disappointing. Why bother to put the investigators, prosecutors, judge, jury and me through this if one person can set justice aside, with the swipe of a pen?"

Gillibrand told The Huffington Post that the hearing was structured intentionally so that the military leaders would sit for the first panel, hearing testimony from a number of military sexual assault survivors. A recent House Armed Services hearing came under criticism when the many members of the military in the audience -- and the panelists, Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Welsh III and Gen. Edward Rice, the Air Force commander for Air Education and Training Command -- left the room after Welsh and Rice's testimony, before victims had a chance to speak.

Brian K. Lewis, former petty officer third class in the U.S. Navy and a board member for Protect Our Defenders, is the first male survivor of military sexual assault to testify before Congress.

Defense and Veterans Affairs estimates project that a majority of victims of military sexual assault are men -- about 56 percent, according to Lewis' testimony. Yet, women only make up some 15 percent of the military, and one in three military women has been sexually assaulted, according to the Department of Defense.

"I am here today because I am not alone," Lewis said. "The reforms haven't worked because they have targeted the symptoms of this epidemic. They have not addressed the root cause, which is that the military justice system is fraught with inherent personal bias, conflict of interest, abuse of authority and too often a low regard for the victim."

Rebekah Havrilla, who served as the lone woman in an Army Explosive Ordnance Disposal unit, told the subcommittee how a commander decided not to pursue charges against a man who raped her on the last day of

her tour in Afghanistan, then posted photos he had taken of the attack online. She says the commander also declined to pursue the case against her team leader, who assaulted and harassed her throughout her deployment to the point where she suffered from severe depression and insomnia.

"The feeling of outrage over something like this happening -- he's convicted by a group of peers and someone can just say, 'Oh I'm going to overturn this,'" Havrilla told HuffPost of why she thinks the Wilkerson case may have gained traction, while the thousands of cases like hers have not. "There's a shock value with this, and with media attention -- kind of good timing, if you want to call it that -- it played into the political scene."

While reluctant to talk about her personal experience, she said she agreed to testify so that the military cannot be in denial of stories of survivors like herself.

"They need to have it in their faces, they need to hear from people who have been through it," she said. "They need to be challenged by their stories and those stigmas."

Shaheen told The Huffington Post ahead of her statements Wednesday that she is encouraged by Hagel's response, and though she is waiting to get all of the facts on the Wilkerson case from the secretary before she takes further action, she has thus far been "outraged" by the details that have emerged.

"I did not interpret that to mean nothing can be done on this case," Shaheen said of Hagel's statement that he has no authority under the UCMJ to overturn Franklin's decision. "Congress has the power of oversight."

When asked how Congress can ensure that reforms to the military have teeth, she answered, flatly: "Persistence."

**UPDATE:** 3:15 p.m. -- While significantly more military officials attended the second half of the hearing, an unusually high number of senators -- including members of Congress who do not serve on the subcommittee -- also attended to hear victims tell their stories.

"Their words inspire all our efforts," said Maj. Gen. Gary Patton, director of the Pentagon's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office.

"I am no stranger to culture change," continued Patton, the first male to serve as SAPRO director after serving as a commander in Iraq and Afghanistan and leading the implementation of the repeal of "don't ask, don't tell."

"How will we know when this culture effect has taken hold?" he asked. "When prevention of sexual assault is as closely scrutinized as ... friendly fire," he said. "We are not there yet."

## **LYING TO SURVIVE AT THE U.S. AIR FORCE ACADEMY**

### **An open letter to Lt. Gen. Michelle Johnson from MRFF client "Spartacus"**

*The following letter was written by a client of the  
Military Religious Freedom Foundation (MRFF) at the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado  
Springs, CO:*

I am Spartacus.

**I am over 100 cadets strong at the USAF Academy.** I am also the seventh Spartacus in succession, covering more than six and a half years since first appearing within the AF Academy Cadet Wing in the summer of 2007.

We, of Spartacus, live a total lie every single day and night to survive here.

In our world here at the Air Force Academy, having the indispensable odor of a practicing, "all in", committed Christian among our peers and superiors means being accepted as one of the pack. With that "in" smell, no one bothers us, tries to convert us, questions our honor, our commitment to service, our motives—we are generally left to our own devices, studying, practicing, flying, athletics and marching.

Frequently, though, and to our disgust, we feel forced to embrace the odor; to "roll in it." If the odor fades, or we slip outside of the pack for too long and the alphas and betas sense that we are drifting, we are reined back in with a subtle sniff or bark or nip to make sure that we know our place. If we question or run away or attempt to fight back, then the pack circles and strikes. We've seen this happen to our friends and (mostly) to those outside our pack and it's just not worth the risk. The pack howls: "He doesn't get it. He can't be one of our honorable pack. She can't be an alpha and lead us. She can't excel in THIS pack—not while we rule the pack. Not while we're the majority."

Some cadets decide to fight, but that doesn't last long. They're trouble makers. They're not team players. They don't have "character" or ethical standards. They're deviants. We'll remember them and keep them at bay. "See, he doesn't bow his head when WE pray. She's not one of us." Branded as outsiders, those who choose to remain may form a small group that meets in a basement. They console themselves with stories of persecution, but they will remain outside the circles of power dictated by the larger pack. They are constantly reminded, too, that they don't have the right odor and that they can only be "saved" if they give in and clearly surrender to the pack's standard of what Jesus is supposed to be. And, to the pack members, especially great rewards come to those that bring the errant cadets back to the pack.

We, of Spartacus, don't fight, though. Not yet. We admire those who do, but our dream is to succeed and excel and prepare to serve once we escape the Academy's South Gate entrance's gravity permanently. We deeply fear that word of our not belonging to the great pack (or even suspicion thereof) will follow us after the Thunderbirds roar overhead at our graduation and that friends and leaders of USAFA's pack will be all too ready to poison our futures, wherever we go. We've seen it happen. Over and over again. We know it will.

So, we choose to take (what some would say is) the coward's path, rationalizing that the ends (serving our nation honorably) DO justify the means. We hold our noses and, though we loathe that particular smell, we roll. We roll with the pack watching us, we go to the prayer breakfasts quietly, but just often enough to quell suspicion, so we can eat and sleep and study and march in peace and unmolested. We put the "right" Christian books, DVDs and CDs on our shelves. We always enthusiastically say Merry Christmas, not Happy Holidays. We know that MOST of our squadron-mates find the smell of this "only way, truth and life" to be homey and comforting, den-like and warm. They gain great confidence and (some would claim) a sense of peace from it, but it's not our personal perfume, it's not how we'd LIKE to feel, and so it comes at a terrible and frightening cost—to our spirit, our psyche, our self esteem and our personal sense of honor.

Occasionally, and at great risk, some of us—introduced silently, as roaming eyes, during group prayer, occasionally meet a sympathetic glance—secretly gather away from the pack and vent our rage at the AF Academy system that maintains and feeds the pack. In our little subpack, we rant that the pack doesn't just exclude and shun outsiders and those who don't believe in Jesus Christ, but in particular those who don't believe in him robustly enough; the "right way." **There is only one accepted aroma in the pack. It's the unforgiving stench of brutal evangelism, fundamentalism, restriction, and judgment.** We rage that everyone just assumes that all cadets must beseech God to be honorable, that if we don't add four special words ("So help me God") to our oaths, at appropriately audible levels, we will be "outed," judged for being terminally unworthy. Mostly, we scream about needing to roll in the odor to succeed and how much we hate the dishonorable act of lying to everyone, especially ourselves. When Spartacus graduates at the end of each academic year, we choose a successor. I am the seventh.

Occasionally, we get glimmers of hope, though—only to be dashed by those we assume must be the highest pack leaders—long-time members themselves, in good standing since they were cadets. When a USAFA

employee makes a very public proclamation that he will ignore published Air Force policy and try to bring as many in his organization into the pack as he can, try to convince all those around him to roll in the pack's odor, we hope that this will finally cause the break—but nothing happens. When it is discovered that one of the high counselors of the pack has a long history of practicing shaman, and universally discredited, psychology at the cost of who-knows-how-many, all in the name of the pack, nothing happens. We're told that he doesn't REALLY interact with the other wolves—he's just the "chief of counseling wolves". Meanwhile, at least nine cadets of Spartacus fear his influence because they know that HE THINKS he can change their "chosen" deviant lesbian, gay and bisexual ways.

And then, just this week, something truly remarkable happens. One of the pack—we assume he had to be one of the pack—speaks the simplest truths by reading an Air Force Instruction aloud. (We thought the AFI was just window-dressing to calm the jackals, never really to be enforced or even spoken.) He tells hundreds under his command that their religion is their personal decision and that they should not "share" it with their students and subordinates because of the effect it might have in the classroom and the office—because of the POWER inherent to the military and educational hierarchy. That he, and we, should respect the privacy and beliefs of all, and that belief or non-belief should not be a basis for judgment. He actually recognized exactly how we feel every day and said so publicly. Some cheered (deep inside themselves), but no one clapped nor even commented beyond muffled whispers because, in the end, he's just not the Alpha Wolf.

You are, Lt. Gen. Johnson. And only you.

Some of us thought, "Wow, this is great. Now that this is out in the open, the Superintendent, Lt. Gen. Michelle Johnson, will be asked about it and she'll support his words publicly and maybe, just maybe, we can be ourselves and stop the charade." But, we haven't heard a thing from you at all. Deafening silence. Why?

We could assume that you support his statements, but we can't be sure because we've been badly burned by this before. We've been told publicly, at the Academy's own symposium on character and leadership, by the previous Superintendent's wife (and others) that our number one priority must be GOD—presumably her idea of God (Jesus-on-steroids) and that without faith — HER faith — we are nothing. Our leaders still "invite" us to the Prayer Luncheon and the Prayer Breakfast and take mental attendance of the pack members there with heads bowed. Nothing's changed in our eyes—yet.

Please speak for us, Lt. Gen. Johnson. Please, ma'am, reiterate, for all to see and hear, the Dean's words, expand upon them, and START the process by which we can all stop the lies and live unjudged, unsegregated, and honorably. We can't and won't be open without that step. We can't run the risk. We can't use the USAFA chain of command we're taught to trust because we fear that the pack IS the chain. We want to serve. But, until the Alpha Wolf tells us otherwise, you leave us no choice but to hold our noses and roll in that odor to stay safe.

**We detest that we have no other choices.**

## **Navy Nuclear Cheating Scandal Grows to 30 Sailors**

Feb 05, 2014 | by Richard Sisk

**The Navy's investigation of suspected cheating by senior enlisted staff at its premier nuclear propulsion training facility has expanded to at least 30 sailors, or about one-fifth of the supervisors on base, a Navy official said Wednesday.**

Currently, there are about 150 nuclear engineering watch supervisors at Joint Base Charleston, S.C., and 30 of them have been barred from the site as the cheating probe by the Naval Criminal Investigative Service continues, the Navy official said.

At a Pentagon briefing on the scandal Tuesday, Adm. John Richardson, director of the Naval Nuclear Program, said that probably **fewer than 20 supervisors were initial suspects.**

However, Adm. Jonathan Greenert, the chief of Naval Operations, cautioned at the same briefing that NCIS investigation was just beginning and "we don't know where it's going to go. We may find more. We're in the early stages of this."

The nuclear propulsion program is one of the prides of the fleet since it was formed by the late Adm. Hyman Rickover, and Greenert's presence to announce the investigation signified how seriously the Navy was taking the allegations.

Navy officials said the suspected sailors allegedly cheated on written tests they were taking to be certified as instructors at the nuclear propulsion school. More senior sailors allegedly passed on exam information to those taking the tests, the officials said.

If the cheating charges are substantiated, those involved would likely be dismissed from the Navy, Richardson said.

At the Pentagon briefing, Greenert was asked whether the Navy cheating scandal and an unrelated cheating scandal involving Air Force nuclear launch officers indicated a military-wide lapse of ethics.

"If I knew that answer, I would be doing all kind of things within the Navy," Greenert said.

**The Air Force scandal also escalated quickly. Last week, Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James said the Office of Special Investigations was focusing on at least 92 officers suspected of cheating on monthly proficiency tests, all of them at Malmstrom Air Force Base, Mont.**

**When the scandal was first announced, the total stood at 34 officers.**

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## The Risks of Internet Voting

**NOTE:** The following is essentially my testimony from last year on the Internet Voting bill. What has changed? Only that with recent revelations, that the risks of Internet voting should be more obvious than ever: The Target hacking, the hacking of the Oregon SOS web site, the Snowden revelations – all computers and Internet communication is subject to compromise, especially by insiders, foreign interests, and large corporations – by insiders, foreign interests, and corporations that have motivations to stop at nothing to influence elections.

### Internet Voting is Risky, Expensive, likely Unconstitutional, Ineffective, and Discriminatory

In addition, this bill (passed in 2013) suffers from a being brief description, insufficiently defined. The devil will be in the details – this bill should have those details available for registrars, town clerks, and advocates to review and publicly testify for or against such details. Who would be responsible for implementing it? How will we pay for it?

- Internet Voting Is Risky In Theory: The Computer Technologists Statement on Internet Voting details five technical challenges to such voting that have never been resolved and concludes: *"The internet has the potential to transform democracy in many ways, but permitting it to be used for public elections without assurance that the results are verifiably accurate is an extraordinary and unnecessary risk to democracy."*
- Internet Voting Has Proven Risky In Practice: In September 2010, Washington D.C. opened their proposed internet voting system to ethical hackers. With very short notice, the system was compromised, changing all past and future votes. Separately, the municipal network was entered, passwords to municipal systems obtained, and the list of codes for Internet voting for all voters in the November election were obtained. Internet voting for the election was cancelled. Washington D.C. should be applauded for allowing the test, since most other jurisdictions have not subjected their systems to such testing. Just recently, a user compromised a test in Edmonton, Canada. <http://tinyurl.com/CT2013sb283>
- This is an Expensive, Unfunded Mandate: Waterloo, Canada estimated Internet voting would cost \$300,000 per election over their current election costs of \$400,000. West Virginia spent about \$75,000 for 54 electronic Military votes. Often cited as a success, West Virginia has yet to continue online voting since the prototype in 2010.
- This Bill Is Discriminatory: Many overseas voters are veterans but not members of the Military. Some serve in remote areas or challenging conditions. Including: State Department, CIA, and NGO staffs, plus Military Contractors, and Peace Corps volunteers. .
- This Bill Is Likely Unconstitutional: The Connecticut Constitution says that *"The right of secret voting shall be preserved."* i.e. it is a guarantee that everyone's votes shall be anonymous, protected from coercion and purchase. Network communications can be intercepted, web entry can be monitored.
- This bill Is Ineffective: On Tuesday, Veterans' Affairs heard testimony on S.B. 647 for email and fax voting that, sadly only 60% of ballots requested by Connecticut's military were successfully returned. Yet also testimony from Rhode Island officials that only 53 of 1700 of their voters used fax and email return. If Connecticut were equally successful with online military voting, we could expect our return rate to increase, at most, from 60% to 63.2%.



- There Are Move Effective, Safer, and Economical Alternatives Available: Conventional solutions for effective, safe, and economical Military voting are available and proven. Let us exploit the MOVE Act and help our overseas military voter take full advantage of free or prepaid express ballot return.

I oppose this bill in particular because:

- It contains no controls, specifications, or requirements for online voting. Would there be any public testing of such systems? Would there be any attempt to address the Techologists's concerns or prevent problems similar to those in Washington, D.C?
- What entity would be responsible for implementing it? It does not specify if such voting would be the responsibility of individual municipalities or the Secretary of the State.
- How would we pay or it? It provides no funds either for the State or Municipalities to implement.
- Could Connecticut accomplish centrally what Washington D.C. has not? Would each of Connecticut's 169 municipalities be able to afford such systems and accomplish what Washington D.C. has not?
- Would the system be optional by municipality? Different in each municipality? If implemented in only some, would it be unfair, violating Federal civil rights and voting laws?

Please join me, computer scientists, security experts, and advocates nationwide in opposing online and Internet voting in any form.

Failing that, at least provide the funds and a mandate to require such a system be subject to contracted evaluation and testing by recognized independent network security experts, and open to extensive public testing, at least as open as the tests in Washington, D.C – before such a system is trusted with actual votes.

There is no need to applaud my military service. Yet, there will be every reason to applaud your service, if you drop this bill. It is an affront to the ideals for which all of our veterans and ancestors have given so much.

Thank you

"If I can shop and bank online, why can't I vote online" by David Jefferson,  
Computer Scientist, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, Board Chairman, Verified Voting  
Foundation, Board of Directors, California Voter Foundation  
<http://electionlawblog.org/wp-content/uploads/jefferson-onlinevoting.pdf>

Free express mail ballot return for overseas military:

*"Uniformed Services personnel, their voting age dependents and civilians stationed overseas may Express return their absentee ballots FREE of charge from any APO/FPO/DPO, American embassy or consulate with this label".*

[http://www.fvap.gov/resources/media/mpsa\\_poster.pdf](http://www.fvap.gov/resources/media/mpsa_poster.pdf)

View the video of the Secretary of the State Denise Merrill's *Symposium On Online Voting*, held for the benefit of the General Assembly, with Nationally recognized experts on Internet voting:

<http://ctvoterscount.org/secretary-of-the-states-online-voting-symposium/>

NPR video of a representative of the Department of Homeland Security discussing why the Internet is not safe for voting:

<http://ctvoterscount.org/dhs-expert-internet-voting-not-secure/>

That state of Minnesota has an exemplary record of implementing the MOVE Act, with the assistance of the Overseas Vote Foundation (OVF). Here is Minnesota Secretary of State, Mark Ritchie's talk from Jan 24, 2013 at the OVF forum for more information. See the OVF for more information on how Military and Overseas voters would like to be served:

Video: <http://tinyurl.com/b7cxu78> OVF: <https://www.overseasvotefoundation.org/>

West Virginia does not provide for online voting. It currently does provide risky, unreliable, and non-secret email and fax voting. <http://tinyurl.com/WV20130207>

Waterloo, Canada estimates online voting will add \$300,000 to current election costs of \$400,000. And the risks of the similar system in Edmonton

<http://ctvoterscount.org/if-it-feels-good-do-it-in-canada/>

Edmonton, Canada. Concerns, costs, and compromise of test of an expensive vendor system.

<http://ctvoterscount.org/CTVCdata/13/01/Leader20130204.pdf>

<http://tinyurl.com/EdRejects>

#### **EDMONTON JOURNAL**

#### ***Edmonton council defeats proposal for Internet voting this fall***

- The future of Internet voting in Alberta is unclear after Edmonton city council turned down a proposal Wednesday to allow online ballots as part of October's civic election.

Although city staff insisted the system was extensively tested over the past year, including a mock "jelly bean" election and confirmation by a citizen jury, councillors worried the process isn't entirely secure.

"The fact is, if major banks can be hacked, what's guaranteeing our voting system wouldn't be hacked?" Coun. Kerry Diotte asked.

There were also fears someone could collect other voters' email addresses, picture identification and passwords, then cast multiple ballots in a hotly contested race.

"If you want to coerce someone, it's easier to do that with Internet voting than it is at a voting station," Coun. Tony Caterina said.

"At this point in 2013, I don't think you're ready to answer all these questions."

There was little support for the initial proposal to permit Internet ballots before the Oct. 21 election in advance polls, which attracted 15,000 people in 2010.

But council voted 11-2 against a compromise motion to allow it just for special ballots, used three years ago by about 800 shut-ins, election workers and people away from Edmonton for an extended period.

Don Iveson and Ben Henderson were the only councillors to favour the move, arguing electronic ballots are as secure as the paper version.

"I think there's, frankly, some paranoia about the technology because it's unknown," Iveson said.

"I understand the instinct to want to test it further, but those risks that people will behave badly aren't going to go away."

City clerk Alayne Sinclair said an outside consulting company was hired to try to breach the jelly bean election system, but along with a NAIT computing class and 10 other hackers, they didn't succeed.

While one computer programmer says he cast two ballots in the mock election, showing it's vulnerable to fraud, he appears to have done this by registering twice, which wasn't being controlled, Sinclair said.

"We were told by the professionals that for all of the time people say they can penetrate the system, there's no example anywhere that anyone has."

Providing Internet ballots would have cost \$400,000.

The city has already paid \$400,000 to test the system developed by Spain's Scytl, but Coun. Linda Sloan had philosophical as well as money concerns.

"Do we really want to configure a system where people can vote in their pyjamas? ... Voting is an act of civic engagement," she said.

"I'm not convinced this is a direction we want to take, particularly because it privatizes both the act and the system of voting."

The province has been working with Edmonton, St. Albert and Strathcona County since last year on how to introduce Alberta's first Internet voting, already used in dozens of centres in Ontario and Nova Scotia.

Grande Prairie, the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, Airdrie, and Lethbridge were also studying the idea.

Officials in the two capital region municipalities don't know what will happen now that their largest partner has backed out.

"The intention of the pilot was to have the three of us do it together," said Jacqueline Roblin, Strathcona County's manager of legislative services.

"Now that Edmonton is no longer on board, I'm not sure how this will proceed."

But Kalina Kamenova, who spent months working on public consultation for the scheme as research director at the University of Alberta's Centre for Public Involvement, said she thinks city council made the wrong decision.

Most councillor concerns were already addressed by the 17-member citizen jury, which after days of discussions and hearing from experts supported online voting, Kamenova wrote in an email.

"It is surprising that councillors went against the verdict of the citizen jury and overlooked Edmontonians' overwhelming support for this innovative voting option," she wrote, emphasizing this is her opinion.

"It makes you wonder why so much money is being spent by the city for public involvement when citizens' input doesn't really have any impact on decision-making."

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## Computer Technologists' Statement on Internet Voting

Election results must be *verifiably accurate* -- that is, auditable with a permanent, voter-verified record that is independent of hardware or software. Several serious, potentially insurmountable, technical challenges must be met if elections conducted by transmitting votes over the internet are to be verifiable. There are also many less technical questions about internet voting, including whether voters have equal access to internet technology and whether ballot secrecy can be adequately preserved.

*Internet voting should only be adopted after these technical challenges have been overcome, and after extensive and fully informed public discussion of the technical and non-technical issues has established that the people of the U.S. are comfortable embracing this radically new form of voting.*

A partial list of technical challenges includes:

- The voting system as a whole must be verifiably accurate in spite of the fact that client systems can never be guaranteed to be free of malicious logic. Malicious software, firmware, or hardware could change, fabricate, or delete votes, deceive the user in myriad ways including modifying the ballot presentation, leak information about votes to enable voter coercion, prevent or discourage voting, or perform online electioneering. Existing methods to "lock-down" systems have often been flawed; even if perfect, there is no guaranteed method for preventing or detecting attacks by insiders such as the designers of the system.
- There must be a satisfactory way to prevent large-scale or selective disruption of vote transmission over the internet. Threats include "denial of service" attacks from networks of compromised computers (called "botnets"), causing messages to be mis-routed, and many other kinds of attacks, some of which are still being discovered. Such attacks could disrupt an entire election or selectively disenfranchise a segment of the voting population.
- There must be strong mechanisms to prevent undetected changes to votes, not only by outsiders but also by insiders such as equipment manufacturers, technicians, system administrators, and election officials who have legitimate access to election software and/or data.
- There must be reliable, unforgeable, unchangeable voter-verified records of votes that are at least as effective for auditing as paper ballots, without compromising ballot secrecy. Achieving such auditability with a secret ballot transmitted over the internet but without paper is an unsolved problem.
- The entire system must be reliable and verifiable even though internet-based attacks can be mounted by anyone, anywhere in the world. Potential attackers could include individual hackers, political parties, international criminal organizations, hostile foreign governments, or even terrorists. The current internet architecture makes such attacks difficult or impossible to trace back to their sources.

Given this list of problems, there is ample reason to be skeptical of internet voting proposals. Therefore, the principles of operation of any internet voting scheme should be publicly disclosed in sufficient detail so that anyone with the necessary qualifications and skills can verify that election results from that system can reasonably be trusted. Before these conditions are met, "pilot studies" of internet voting in government elections should be avoided, because the apparent "success" of such a study absolutely cannot show the absence of problems that, by their nature, may go undetected. Furthermore, potential attackers may choose only to attack full-scale elections, not pilot projects.

The internet has the potential to transform democracy in many ways, but permitting it to be used for public elections without assurance that the results are verifiably accurate is an extraordinary and unnecessary risk to democracy.

<http://www.verifiedvotingfoundation.org/article.php?id=6611>

## Endorsements [Computer Technologists' Statement on Internet Voting]

The computer technology experts below endorse this statement. Affiliations are for identification only, and do not imply that employers have a position on the statement.

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